



## FOOD FACILITY INSPECTIONS

FHD conducts risk-based inspections, which means we focus on items that strongly affect food safety and foodborne illness. In a risk-based inspection, issues such as handwashing, food temperatures, and dishwashing are more important than a missing light bulb or a broken tile.

Our team of Environmental Health Specialists conduct inspections using a statewide standard "Food Inspection Report". The Food Inspection Report lists all possible violations, including major violations, minor violations and Good Retail Practices, and is an excellent tool for food facility operators to uphold the highest level of food safety. Specialists receive continuous training on inspection procedures to ensure that food facilities across the County are held to the same high standard.

### Contact Us

Plan Check Information: (858) 505-6659  
Plan Check Scheduling: (858) 505-6660  
Plan Check E-mail: [plnchk@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:plnchk@sdcounty.ca.gov)  
Permit Information: (858) 505-6666



County of San Diego  
Department of Environmental Health  
Food and Housing Division  
P.O. Box 129261  
San Diego, CA 92112-9261

Website

[www.sdcdeh.org](http://www.sdcdeh.org)

Main Phone Number

(858) 505-6648

(800) 253-9933

For technical questions, contact the  
Food & Housing Duty Specialist  
(858) 505-6900

[fh dutyeh@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:fh dutyeh@sdcounty.ca.gov)

To report a food-borne illness, contact the  
FHD Epidemiology Liaison  
(858) 505-6814

[fhdepi@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:fhdepi@sdcounty.ca.gov)

To report a sanitation complaint, contact the  
FHD Complaint Desk  
(858) 505-6903

[fh dutyeh@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:fh dutyeh@sdcounty.ca.gov)

## GUIDE TO OPENING A NEW FOOD BUSINESS IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY



*"Environmental and public health through leadership,  
partnership and science"*

## OPENING A NEW FOOD FACILITY



This brochure will provide you with requirements to open, build or remodel a food facility within San Diego County.

### Apply for Plan Review



The Plan Check and Construction unit is responsible for reviewing the plans of new food facilities, existing food facilities that are being remodeled, and mobile food facilities, such as vending vehicles and pushcarts. a set of complete and easily readable plans drawn to scale with specifications. The plans will either be approved or rejected within twenty working days after receipt and the applicant will be notified of the decision. Plan check construction guidelines and other useful publications are on our website: [www.sdcountry.ca.gov/deh/food/foodplancheck.html](http://www.sdcountry.ca.gov/deh/food/foodplancheck.html)

Submit the following with your application:

- ✓ Plan Review Application
- ✓ Plan Review fee
- ✓ Proposed plans drawn to scale
- ✓ Name and address of the food facility
- ✓ Proposed menu
- ✓ Finish schedule of interior finishes
- ✓ Equipment schedule
- ✓ Manufacturer specifications for equipment
- ✓ Complete exhaust ventilation plans
- ✓ Site plan

### Schedule Plan Check Inspections

Once the plans have been approved, you will receive a Plan Approval Sheet. The next step is to call (858) 505-6600 to schedule a preliminary and final inspection.

### Apply for a Health Permit

Whether the facility is a brand new business or the facility has undergone a change in ownership, a new application must be submitted. The public health permit application is available at:

[www.sdcountry.ca.gov/deh/food/publications.html](http://www.sdcountry.ca.gov/deh/food/publications.html)

## Obtain Food Safety Certification

State law requires each food facility to have at least one owner/employee that has passed a state-approved Food Safety Certification exam. Each certification is applicable to only one facility. These certificates are valid for five (5) years and must be renewed. The state approved exams are:

National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation  
Phone: (800) 765-4842  
Website: [www.nraef.org](http://www.nraef.org)

Exterior Assessments aka Thompson Prometrics  
Phone: (800) 624-2736  
Website: [www.prometric.com/foodsafety/](http://www.prometric.com/foodsafety/)

National Registry of Food Safety Professionals  
Phone: (619) 885-5522 or (800) 446-0257  
Website: [www.nrfsp.com](http://www.nrfsp.com)

### Provide Proof of Food Handler Training

In addition to Food Safety Certification, all food handlers are required by San Diego County Code to possess either a valid food handler card issued by a County authorized food handler training school or a County of San Diego food handler test administered by the current food safety manager who has passed a state-approved food safety certification exam.

Food handler cards are valid for three years, and can be renewed by taking a short exam and paying a renewal fee at one of our offices. A list of approved training schools and other food handler information is available at: [www.sdcountry.ca.gov/deh/food/foodhandler.html](http://www.sdcountry.ca.gov/deh/food/foodhandler.html)

### Pass Final Inspection

During the final inspection, plan check staff make sure that all necessary corrections have been made and the facility has met all requirements, including food safety certification and food handler training. If the facility passes final inspection, then the plan check staff grants final written approval to operate and issues the public health permit.

## OTHER AGENCIES

In addition to the County of San Diego, Department of Environmental Health (DEH), Food and Housing Division, there are other agencies you will need to contact to make sure you meet the requirements for your business.

### Building Department



You may need a permit from the building department for construction and/or equipment installations.  
County of San Diego: (858) 565-5920  
City of San Diego: (619) 446-5000

### Fire Department



Depending on your locality, additional review may be needed by the local Fire Marshall.  
City of San Diego: (619) 446-5440

### Zoning



Contact the local zoning department for requirements to operate a mobile food facility prior to plan submittal.

### Water/Wastewater Agencies



Contact the local water/wastewater departments for requirements regarding wastewater and storm water. If the facility is being constructed within the City of San Diego, then approval through the Food Establishment Wastewater Discharge (FEWD) Permit Program is needed prior to submitting documentation to DEH.  
City of San Diego FEWD: (858) 654-4188

### Air Pollution Control District

Ensure air pollution control laws are followed.  
General Inquiry : (858) 586-2600

### DEH Land & Water Quality Division

If the food facility is on a septic tank or private well, contact the DEH Land & Water Quality Division.  
General Inquiry : (858) 565-5173